1:Sanders Z-5/4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

horsefly, he will put it in his wallet for good luck. Or if he is returning from the field and sees two crows quarreling while flying high over a house, he will be reminded of the belief that either the husband or the wife in that house will die soon. If he sees a crow pass in front of him from right to left, he will consider it a good omen; but if from left to right, he will expect bad luck. Should a rabbit or snake be in the path ahead, the peasant knows he must walk on in a straight line; should the road turn to the right or left, then the individual had better return home and start the journey the following day.

A spider walking on you will bring good luck, but if you come upon two snakes fighting and eating each other, a close relation of yours will die. Should you be a shepherd in the Vardousia Mountains of Central Greece, you would probably believe that the wild goats which graze in herds are guarded by the devil and that is why one can hear them make a whistling noise. Furthermore, these wild goats have the same notches cut in their ears as the tame ones kept by the shepherds, which to these mountaineers is proof positive that the devil must be the one who puts the markings there.

Seeing some insect or animal may bring to mind a story learned when a child. The bee, for instance, was once as white as cotton. When Adam and Eve met the devil in the Garden of Eden, it was the bee that saw them first and flew immediately to tell God the news. The devil, who was then holding a burning torch in his hand, ran and tried to catch the bee to keep her from her mission. He could not reach her, but as she was nearing God the devil from afar threw the flaming torch at her. The fire singed her so that she became black. God, who saw all of this, ordered the human beings to burn in the churches only the candles made from beeswax since the bee had proven to be the purest creature of all. I am often asked if these folk beliefs (cited here and in later sections of this book) are widely held or are only the relic in the mind of some aged person. It is safe to say that almost all of them are very much alive at the conversational level. People are aware of them, talk about them. Obviously, many act on them, while others do not. But they are a part of the general atmosphere, as is the belief common in America that a person should not walk under a ladder.

Such beliefs, stories, and personal experiences with many kinds of plants and animals reinforce the rural Greek's sense of intimacy with nature, which develops because of his constant exposure to the elements in the course of his daily life. The Greek peasant, like many farmers elsewhere, moves through a living landscape with which he communicates.

The same holds true for his view of the cosmos and the movement of the heavenly bodies.[1] One of the simplest and clearest descriptions of the latter is taken from an account of a village prepared by a singing master in

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

243 178 exhaustion hangs over the incessant labor of these peasants through the fields of Greece at threshing time. And when the onlooker finally sees the combine doing all of the operations at once, he experiences a feeling of relief. It is as if the accumulated work and sweat of centuries begins to be removed from the people who struggle for their bread.

[241] [311] [406] [462] Mechanization has begun to do miracles in the waste lands of Greece as well. One of the agricultural achievements since the war has been the drainage of marshlands by gigantic earth-moving machinery and dredges, thus putting large acreages under rice cultivation for the first time. Here the machine is a mixed blessing, for where rice growing has come with its promise of higher income for the people, it has also meant much heavier burdens for the women to whose lot falls the new task of planting the rice and cultivating it while the men give the orders and manipulate the flow of water.

178 312 241 406 [433] The machine age has also brought pumps: not the kind powered by blindfolded donkeys or by tired human feet, but the kind that are run by gas engines or, in some places, by electricity. First, heavy drills operated by a semigovernment agency reach down for the water and, when it is found, the pumps are installed. The water is channeled into thirsty cotton fields and vegetable gardens to help raise the agricultural production of Greece up to as much as 37 percent over prewar figures.

241 ● 422 178 [407] [452] [464] Around Larissa, in Thessaly, on the trip with the director of agriculture and on other trips through that area, I had seen the great concentration of mechanized equipment which contrasted sharply with many other areas of Greece where peasants found it hard to get even iron plowshares or new hoes or sickles. In this mechanized area I talked with a man who bought a tractor. Alekos was his name. This is what he told me: "Three years ago I bought a tractor on the installment plan. The first year I did very well, for I could do work for my neighbors after I finished my own work and they paid me a good income. Now six of my neighbors have tractors; owning one is like a craze and I do not have so much work to do for others."

[243] [554] Alekos went on to describe how the wheat of his village had been threshed by machinery since 1925, each farmer bringing his grain to the place where the thresher had been set up, but nobody locally had owned a tractor and the thresher had come in from outside. Since the war, however, tractors had become so popular that they were symbols of social prestige. We told Alekos that we had been much amused by the sight of the peasants going to market in town with their families aboard the tractors and wondered if the higher the tractor the greater the prestige. He smiled and said:

> That is partly true but in the beginning only those who had 250 acres of land could buy a tractor and they needed a medium rather than a small tractor. Now anybody can buy a tractor who can afford one and will try to get one as good as his neighbor's.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Thessaly

acres a day with a tractor. "Before the war," he went on to say, "a peasant who tried something new was considered an amusing person with a loose screw in his head. Even the agriculturists were received with 'what have those educated people got to tell us who have callouses from working?' Also, the agriculturist has learned more about agriculture and more about people, changing for the better."

The director's wife agreed with what we had learned from Alekos about the effect of mechanization upon woman's work. She did point out that machine harvesting and threshing had relieved the housewife of an old burden of feeding many people for long periods of time when the work was done by hand. However, the women still plant tobacco and cultivate cotton. Men are helping out a little more, but this hard field work in Thessaly is still a woman's job. Here again there is some compensation for the women. Although they have as much work now as before, they have more money. They will change into better dresses in the evening and go for a walk on a weekday, something much less common before the last war. Finally, the director's wife pointed out, those families who own twenty to twenty-five acres of land have acquired ease and prosperity and are becoming a well-to-do peasantry.

Elsewhere around Larissa we inquired about the spread of mechanization. The tractor dealers in the town put Alekos' problems in a somewhat different light. We learned, for example, that a 46-horsepower tractor, with starter and pneumatic tire wheels, cost 55,000 drachmas ($3,667); the purchaser had to pay 40 percent in cash and could sign a bill for the remaining 60 percent, payable after 18 months to the Bank of Greece at the rate of 16 percent interest. Dealers and some of the local government officials considered this rate most oppressive.

A second problem was that of spare parts, most of which had to be imported. Foreign-exchange difficulties and import restrictions make this difficult; when the parts were not available, the owner of the tractor was greatly inconvenienced, to put it mildly. We got some idea of the problem of spare parts when we learned that there were 25 dealers of tractors of different makes in Larissa alone. The dealers attempted to teach the purchasers how to use the machine and, a year or so before, the government had set up traveling schools which instructed in the operation and care of the tractor and afterwards gave examinations for licenses. That year, out of 1,200 farm workers examined, only 700 were given a license.

Dealers also indicated that the buyer of a tractor usually ordered a plow and a disk-harrow, with many requesting grain drills. This equipment adds greatly to the total cost. Most of the tractors were bought by individuals or by a group of three to five peasants, with only twenty to twenty-five tractors belonging to cooperatives.

In the tractor land of Larissa everything seems fine now. As in the case

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

branches) from the hillsides to the house. But the most frequently described and the most romantic arrangements are the *nychteria,* or the groups of women who work together in the evening:

> In the nychteria women help each other finish lighter types of work such as carding, the breaking and cleaning of almonds, cornhusking, kneading of ring biscuits, and the like. In these nocturnal pursuits in certain places customs are strict and men are strictly forbidden to participate. Because this type of work is housework and is carried out in the late hours of the day, it usually takes the form of a social gathering. Drinks and roasted chickpeas are offered, jokes are told, games are played, stories and anecdotes are told, and there is singing and dancing.[1]

Once in a while this dancing may last until dawn. In the summertime, especially, the women gather in the village lanes and spin by the light of the moon or a torch of resinous wood.

When a woman, whose husband is dead or off in the army, needs help which no kinship group can provide, she will go to the head of some other family and say: "My son has gone into the army. I have only daughters. If you will help me in man's work my daughters will help you." They then become *kollegoi* (colleagues or partners) and carry out the agreed-upon obligations.

These examples are not intended to cover the wide range of mutual-aid activities, but they serve to highlight their main features. Fishermen have numerous arrangements for helping one another; farmers may rent a field and work it jointly, or even own olive or nut trees in common. In general, these mutual-aid arrangements are viewed as quite different from landlord-tenant contracts which occurred in many forms before the land redistribution in the 1920s. Those tied together in mutual-aid agreements think of themselves as coequal and not as superior and subordinate partners. Nor do these mutual-aid traditions ordinarily apply to cases where money alone is given as full payment for services received. Instead, they make it possible for villagers to meet many of their important needs without having to pay money for services rendered. The mutual-aid practices discussed here differ also from what might be called philanthropy or deeds done for "the good of the soul" which will be looked at more closely in connection with the villager's religion.

Beyond any question, there is a strong strain of cooperation even among the individualistic Greeks. Although somewhat overidealized, the following comment by T. K. Papaspyropoulos about his Peloponnesian village portrays the essence of mutual aid there:

> When somebody gets sick everybody goes to visit him and look after him. When a young girl gets married all the village goes and helps. When they sow, plow, winnow, or do any other village tasks one person helps the other.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

631 642 this is to be worked out puzzles Greek politicians as much as it does American politicians interested in United States counties, laid out in horse-and-buggy days and ill adapted to today's rapid-transit world. In any combination, one center will gain and the other lose, a fact which has local political repercussions in a democratic system. Some of these become apparent as one views the work of the community council and its president.

The Community Council

207 In Phrangista, a mountain village of Central Greece, I was shaken out of pleasant contemplation as two loudspeakers on the village square suddenly began to inform one and all of the latest news of the day.

275 243 247 This was in the spring of 1953, and we were on a coffeeshop verandah newly made of concrete. Across the dusty thoroughfare, some hens had discovered wheat sheaves drying in front of the house of the carpenter; next door, potted geraniums were blooming in the window of a handsome stone house. We were shut in from the outside world by hazy mountains.

262 The proprietor's wife and daughter had just brought us preserved walnut sweets in a spoon with the traditional glass of water. One spooned the sweets, gulped the water, and commented on the good flavor of the walnuts preserved before they had fully ripened. And then came the radio. These

207 177 loudspeakers, sounding forth noon and evening, featured the broadcasts from Ioannina, Patras, and Athens. The radio, obviously much more powerful than the battery sets frequently encountered in the ordinary coffeehouse, aroused my curiosity. I turned to the president of the community

•[422] council, who was sitting nearby. He told me that the radio was community-owned, that it had been placed there by the American Mission, and that it had "brought civilization" to that place. But the more I talked with him, the more I realized that bringing in civilization through this medium created some local administrative problems.

The American Mission, preferring to distribute the radio directly to the local authorities rather than through a regular government ministry, stipulated that the community would have to provide the gasoline for the motor which furnished the energy for the radio. So the first problem was to find the money to buy the gasoline, which cost a great deal by the time it was transported over the mountains from Lamia. A second problem was locating someone (in this case, two teen-aged boys) who could operate the complicated machine and tune in the radio. The president proudly reported that on the previous day a screw had worked loose and the program was temporarily interrupted — but only temporarily — for these competent youngsters quickly found the trouble and replaced the screw.

623 653 651 727 Before I left Phrangista, the president wanted me to see the church which the villagers had recently rebuilt. It had been completely and deliberately destroyed by the Nazis. The archbishop had given some funds for its res-

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 16 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

With few exceptions, dogs, like the other animals, are not considered pets. They are not given names and are referred to simply as "our dog." Parents permit young children to play roughly with them and to tease and abuse them as they wish. The animal is fed scraps of bread once a day, and there is a feeling that there may be some advantage to keeping it slightly hungry. The dogs also act as scavengers whenever horses or other large animals die in the vicinity of the village. Further evidence for the completely utilitarian attitude of the villagers toward their dogs is the diminution of the number of these animals in the village since the introduction in 1960 of electric lights on the street and paths of Vasilika.

Variations in Wealth

This chapter has dealt with the most important methods of providing subsistence and income in Vasilika from the standpoint of the typical small farm owner. However, all the farming households of Vasilika do not have land or other resources of equal value. Among the thirty-five land-owning households of Vasilika there are perhaps eight whose total holdings range from one to fifteen *stremata* and who own only a few sheep and goats. These households usually own donkeys, however, and occasionally, a mule and some chickens. Along with the four farm households in Vasilika who own no land whatever, these eight are the groups who must find wage labor in the village or in the neighboring communities. The level of living of both these groups is close to what is needed for bare subsistence, and a bad agricultural season leaves them close to destitution.

Another eight households are those of farmers whose land-holdings range from about fifteen to thirty *stremata* and who maintain themselves at what is considered an acceptable standard in the village, but who do so by a narrow margin. In several instances, these are households with children too young either to help in the farm work or to supplement income by wage labor.

Slightly more than half of the total number of farm-owning families—some nineteen—might be considered substantial farmers who may have better or worse years but whose present situation is reasonably secure. The largest land owner in the village has about 150 *stremata*, several men have something like 100, and the rest have holdings of 40 or 50 *stremata*. Forty *stremata* are regarded by common consent as a minimum for a decent standard of living for a farm household of four. Among these farmers, some own enough sheep to get additional income from selling surplus animals, but most have just enough sheep to supply milk, cheese, and meat for household needs. These farmers also have one or two horses.

A gross difference in the quantity of property owned is not the only factor effecting the income variation among the households of Vasilika. Soil fertility and drainage conditions are not the same on all the village lands, so some farmers get greater yields from smaller plots of well-situated fields. In addition,

along three of the walls of the room. On each of the beds, fitted with her own bed linens in the typically varied colors of the Greek village, lies a woman patient.[8] Two are older women wearing their brown kerchiefs and dressed in their own pink flannel nightgowns. The third is a young woman without a kerchief, but lying on the bed fully dressed. It is not possible to move beyond the door because the entire center floor space is covered with a blanket, around the edges of which five relatives of one of the patients are sitting, just finishing a meal which they have been eating picnic-style. The remnants of bread, wine, and cheese are quickly gathered up as the relatives make way for the new visitors and apologize for taking up so much space. The husband of the young woman is warming some macaroni over a small kerosene burner on a tiny table near her bed. When the food is warm enough he serves it to his wife. The daughter and the husband of the third patient are standing near her bed watching the goings-on. The daughter coughs violently. It is midwinter, and she has a cold aggravated by sleeping on a pallet on the floor of her mother's hospital room. A nurse comes in to leave an ice-bag. The daughter helps her mother to adjust it.

If we were in a maternity hospital, the scene would be much the same, except that several infants would be sleeping in wooden cradles in the rooms with their mothers. If cradles had not been brought from home, the infants would be lying in the beds with their mothers. A female relative of the mother will have been present during the birth of the baby. She will have held the mother's hand, sponged her off during the worst of the pains (no anaesthetic is used), and will have comforted her with soothing words.

These hospital scenes and the patterns of hospital care they represent suggest a remarkable similarity between the treatment of illness at home and its treatment in a hospital. The same values and attitudes of Greek culture are demonstrated in both situations, and their reinforcement in a time of stress is not impeded by hospitalization.

Influence of Greek Culture

Greek villagers take great pride in showing-off household possessions. Bed-linens and coverings are of special importance, because they are a part of the dowry which the woman of the household provided at marriage, and she probably wove them herself. Sleeping on bedclothes from home, therefore, not only lessens the unfamiliarity of the hospital surroundings, but also may give the patient and his family a chance to show off the handiwork of the women.

Let us now turn to the crowded conditions of the hospital room. Human companionship is believed by the Greek villagers to be an absolute good. Solitude is considered very unpleasant and is avoided even when people are perfectly well. When someone is in the vulnerable state of illness, it is especially important that he not be left alone. In the hospitals the members of the patient's family take turns staying with him, and neighbors who happen to be in town come and visit. Some of the hospitals, to be sure, provide a special room in

8. A DDT campaign after the Second World War successfully eliminated vermin from the Greek countryside. There is, therefore, little danger that the bedding from home will bring vermin into the hospital.

Megali Vrisi

[Inventory at the beginning of the year- /43 cont./ taken from a representative farmer]

B. Livestock:	Number	Value in drachmas	
Cows	2	5,000	511
Oxen	2	8,000	422
Poultry	30	900	435
Turkeys	3	300	[231]
Hogs	1	250	
Bees	20	4,000	
		18,450	

[251]

C. Family food stuffs in storeroom:	Okes		
Wheat	300	2,100	
Lard	50	3,000	
Honey	10	300	/44/

[231]

D. Animal feed in store:	Okes	Value in Drachmas	
Chick peas	200	800	
Straw	1200	600	
Barley	400	2,000	
		8,800	

[241]
[412]

E. Agricultural implements	Number		
Plow	1	250	
Yoke	1	90	
Harrow	1	600	
Barrels	3	450	
Harrows	2	70	
Shovels	1	30	
Hatchet	1	60	
Axes	1	80	
Wagons	1	3,000	
Sickles	2	50	
		4,680	
	Total	31,930	

/44 cont./

Inventory at the end of the year. December 31st 1934.

Family. the same members as at the beginning.

A. Livestock:	Number	Value in Drachmas
Cows	3	6,000
Oxen	2	8,000
Hens	20	600
Turkeys	3	300
Pigs	1	600
Bees	20	4,000
		19,500

B. Family food in store:

	Okes	
Wheat	350	2,450
Lard	40	2,400
Honey	15	450
Onions	20	60
Beans	15	150
Cracked wheat cereal	40	400
		5,910

C. Animal feed in store:

Straw	1,600	800
Corn	60	300
Chickpea	200	800
		1,900

/45/

D. Agricultural implements:

	Okes	Value in Drachmas
Plow	1	250
Yoke	1	90
Harrow	1	550
Barrels	3	450
Harrows	2	60
Shovel	1	30
Hatchets	1	60

511
422
435
[231]
[251]
[231]
[241]
[412]

511
241

/45 cont./

Sickle	2	40	
Axes	1	70	
Wagons	1	2,500	
			4,200
		Grand total	31,510

[422]
[435]
[412]

A one crop farm does not offer regular income year after year. Due to diversity of climatic conditions there are on the average 3 good years to one poor year. Because of the recent settlement of the farmers their needs are great not only for their families but also for their farms, such as tools, animals, stables, barns, better houses and payment of their loans. The poor years increase the debts of the farmer tremendously and if unable to pay them he tries to find a refuge by telling lies.

[426]
[577]

The Pattern of Land use. One of the greatest troubles that the farmer of Megali Vrisi has is in getting to and from his fields. His share of land which is composed of 45 stremas (10 1/2 acres), is divided into 7 fields. The smallest piece is 1/4 of an acre and the largest 2 acres. The government in its endeavor to give equal chance to all farmers has divided the land into /46/ 7 categories according to fertility and the distance from the village. Thus the nearest field is 1/5 of a mile and the farthest one is 4 1/2 miles. This type of division, besides consuming time to and from the fields and tiring the animals with unnecessary walking, also reduces the productiveness through poor management of the fields. Rotation is neglected since the farmers having their fields in certain section have to agree on crop plantation with their neighbors. The fencing of the individual fields is impossible and anyone can pasture any field after the crops are removed. There is a law that gives the right of pasturing the fields by anyone after the crops are removed.

241
423
[484]

[433]

[242]
[476]

[233]

We can summarize the good and bad points for such a distribution of land.

Advantages:

1. Gives equal opportunity to each farmer to have equal share of fertile as well as of infertile land.

/48 cont./ Farm Implements. The average farmer has the following implements. 241 422 407 [412] [435]

1	Harrow	$3
1	Plow, iron	1.50
1	Wooden plow	1.00
1	Yoke	1.00
3	Hoes	0.35
2	Shovels	0.25
2	Sickles	0.35

The above are the implements which the farmer uses in his farming. Borrowing of tools and implements is extensively practiced by the farmers. [474] Some of the implements and machinery that are too expensive to be owned by one farmer are owned cooperatively such as seed cleaning machine, harrow and harvesting machines. This cooperative movement is very successful and solves some of their pressing economic problems. [326] [445] Some of the implements are made locally and all repairs are done by the local blacksmith.

/49/ Domestic Animals. The livestock problem is one which is still in its infancy. 233 All the sheep are owned by the Thracians and they are increasing them every year. The sheep is the competitor of the cow. A farmer can live without sheep but cannot do [492] [578] without cows, since the only source of power is the cow. The feeling between the sheep owners and the rest of the farmers is not very good, and may develop into a very critical conflict if steps are not taken ahead of time to prevent it. Since pasturing the [423] fields and community pasture is free to any one, the sheep take advantage of this law and get the greatest benefit in competition with the cows.

The local cows are a mixture of the scrubby Macedonian breed and so far no attempt was made to improve the livestock.

One solution discussed for solving some of the pressing problems of livestock is by taxation as follows:

1. No tax should be paid by the sheep up to 12 head.
2. 12 to 25 heads 15 cents per head.
3. 25 to 40 " 30 " " "
4. 40 to 80 " 75 " " "